

Training tutors for student teachers in primary and secondary school

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Introduction

The University of Luxembourg offers a Bachelor's degree course for primary school teachers (BScE) as well as pedagogical training for secondary school teachers (FOPED). Since one simply cannot anticipate all the issues arising in actual classroom situations, teacher training cannot be based on an 'applicationist' or 'technocratic' model. Both the courses described here operate on a 'post-technocratic' (Herzog, 1995: 265), reflective paradigm, with the

aim of training teachers capable of articulating theory and practice and of reflecting on their own practices. As the complex practice of teaching can't be completely be (pre-) determined by the theory school-based training is consequently of high epistemological significance. That's also the reason why one rightly speaks of the necessity of an alternating model of teaching training.

Ensuring the quality of teacher training requires the professional assistance of reflective tutors, and the school-based teacher educators; especially as the University of Luxembourg is considering the tutors as full members of the integrated program of teacher training. To assure a high level of professionalism, the University of Luxembourg has been offering a 20-hour intensive course for secondary school tutors since 2004. Given the obvious limitations of such a programme, as of 2011 the university has decided to offer two further degree courses that are also intended for tutors: a Master Coaching and Management in Education (120 ECTS) and a 'certificate of pedagogy' (60 ECTS). The university is reducing the latter to 20 ECTS. From the academic year 2012/13 onwards, the qualification offered is Certificate of Advanced Studies: tutoring/mentoring (20 ECTS).

In this article, I would like to identify the concept of tutoring underlying these courses of study; the tutoring competences aimed for, and the kind of courses aiming to achieve these aims.

Challenges for student teacher and tutor

Student teachers beginning their careers face a number of challenges, which I would like to present here from three different angles. The student teacher has to acquire the professional gestures concerning the transmission of knowledge, or rather the enabling of students' construction of knowledge. Classroom management and the installation of learning situations require training and practice. In order to learn to act as each situation requires, a student teacher must develop in parallel 'pedagogic tact' (Herbart, 1964), empathy and intuition (Schleiermacher, 1983) and a certain capacity for improvisation (Gage, 1979). This challenge makes the novice ask him- or herself how they can expand their operational competence. Action requires planning and theoretical knowledge, but also (given the complexity and unpredictability of the classroom) the ability of observation

67

68

and 'reflection-in-action' described by Hatton and Smith (1995: 46) as follows: *'The professional practitioner is able consciously to think about an action as it is taking place, making sense of what is happening and shaping successive practical steps using multiple viewpoints as appropriate.'* A habit of reflexivity (as described by Perrenoud, 2001) does however take time to acquire.

Beginning teachers experience teacher training as a difficult and stressful time, being confronted in their own subjectivity, in their desire and pleasure with the demands of the other, here chiefly curricular and institutional discourse, but also with their students. Consciously or unconsciously, student teachers have to ask themselves how to integrate themselves into an educational system without having to abandon their individuality, a topic being investigated above all psycho-analytically and socio-psychologically.

Furthermore, the novice also has to face the question of whether he or she is actually suited to a career as a teacher, whether he or she can feel at ease in it and whether he or she possesses the required personal competences. According to Hegel (1973: 297), the subject only acquires its identity through action: *'the individual can thus not conceive of what it is, until it brings itself into reality through action'*. It is therefore perfectly normal for student teachers

to have to confront the question of personal and professional identity in the face of emerging difficulties. In contention with school as an organisation, with the curriculum, with their classes and with their tutor, the student teacher as subject may encounter mental conflicts and 'rotten compromises'. The symptomatic expression of these can take the form of temporary dysfunctions on the level of conception of teaching, the dealing with classroom situations, or more generally in the student teacher's relation to their students.

The acquisition of the teacher's professional identity manifestly determines the person as a whole and is thus highly complex in nature. One cannot therefore reduce teacher training to rehearsing a series of professional gestures. Quite the contrary, teacher formation frequently entails considerable transformations on the level of subjectivity, as has been established by a number of research projects. (Weber, 2011a; 2011b). The role of the tutor is to accompany their student teacher on this journey of formation. Research has shown that the relationship in this dyad constitutes in itself already a psychosocial, pedagogical and ethical challenge for both protagonists (Weber, 2008). Both of them are committed physically and emotionally in this process. From a discursive point of view, they can be considered situated agents (Combe and Kolbe, 2008: 870).

It is consequently of importance for tutors to resolve their own professional self-image as teachers and as tutors, as attendant and companion of practice. In addition, tutors should acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge and operational competence to assure the professional supervision and assistance of student teachers within the framework of their professional training.

Competence profile (target state) for tutors

The tutor has a crucial role in the training process of a novice teacher. Therefore we have to ask: what makes a good teacher? What are the skills and the qualities to develop?

Professional competence as a teacher

The challenges that the Luxembourg educational system presently faces, especially the multicultural and multi-lingual context, requires more and quick adaptation to changing needs. So we think, that a tutor should be aware of the complexity, the multidimensionality, the uncomputability, the historicity of education (Doyle, 1986) and the paradoxes (Wimmer, 2006) teachers are confronted with. He or she can detect, assess and develop the quality of teaching. He or she knows the different teaching models and forms of assessment. Finally the tutor can observe, conceptualise, reflect on and communicate their own teaching practices.

Competences in initiating and analysing teaching situations and processes with student teachers The tutor is capable of accompanying student teachers in a respectful and responsible manner. He or she:

- can support them in devising their individual learning project and in planning and installing learning situations propitious for development.
- is able to professionally observe teachers in learning situations, to diagnose and

communicate difficulties and to assist student teachers in their reflection in this regard.

- is aware of relevant research findings regarding professional aptitude, teaching expertise, stress factors and training methods for student teachers. ***Competences in structuring and reflecting their own practices as tutors*** He or she:
- can differentiate in shaping and reflecting on their own action in the context of the dyadic relationship and its reciprocity (Herzog, 1995: 273) and its inherent risks.
- knows how to communicate effectively and to collaborate with student teachers.
- is reliable, authentic and articulate in assisting student teachers and appreciative in dealing with them.
- is capable of engaging with their own learning biography as well as with the permanent shifting of roles from teacher to trainer. ***Competences in supporting the reflection of student teachers regarding their function and role as teachers***He or she:
- is able to assist student teachers in integrating into their respective school community, in identifying with the profession and in the transition from teacher training to the occupation as teacher.
- is capable of supporting student teachers in reflecting on their own educational career and their relationship to knowledge and values.
- is skilled in formatively assessing and summatively evaluating the training process. Course design Tutors on the Master course take part both shared and specialised courses. The aims and contents of these are in part still experimental. Both courses conclude with a dissertation,

69

70

which allows students to share their research in colloquia with colleagues and instructors. The future students of the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) take only part focalised courses on tutoring/mentoring.

Shared courses

These courses are to allow students to conceive of their function and their actions in the context of the great discourses and research concerning education, world views, learning and communication, and to become aware of where they situate

themselves within these discourses. Social conditions of education in a process of change; comparative international education systems; ethical fundamentals of education; communication; conflict management; theories of learning in organised contexts and fundamentals of pedagogical diagnostics; teaching – facilitation and selection.

Specialised courses

These courses aim to cover key areas of the tutors' professional practice and in doing so address some of the most important questions currently facing the trainees and the school-based trainers. More than half of the courses are geared toward specialisation in tutoring.

Targets and contents of the courses

Philosophy of the teacher training courses in Luxembourg

Aims:

Students are aware of the philosophy and structure of the certificate programme course. They should be familiar with key concepts and with the organisation of contemporary tutoring in primary or secondary school teacher training respectively and have a personal conception of their function. The social context changes quickly, and so do educational practice and policy. New ideas replace older ones and new problems emerge. Therefore it is important to present, discuss and to evaluate with the teacher educators the concepts of teacher training for primary and secondary school teachers.

Contents:

The core of the course consists in the tasks of a BScE 'field trainer' or secondary school teacher training tutor, the conceptual framework of professional teacher training and its integration into the BScE course and the '*formation pédagogique des enseignants du secondaire*' (secondary school teacher training in Luxembourg). It also explains the philosophy and structure of the certificate programme.

Awareness of the complexities of the teaching profession and of a classroom practices

Generally we see only what we understand. For that reason it is important that the tutor has a great knowledge about theories and research regarding the complexity of learning and teaching situations. So the main concepts regarding the quality of teaching a lesson are to be elaborated with the students.

Aims:

The trainers must be conscious of the complexities of learning, teaching and the teaching profession. Tutors, being teachers themselves, are capable of conceptualising, reflecting on

and communicating their own classroom practices. They are able to grasp, analyse, evaluate and develop the quality of their lessons.

Contents:

The formulation and elaboration of a knowledge base of fundamentals as the pedagogical relationship and reciprocal action in the classroom; basic issues in the interplay of theory and practice; meta-theoretical models of lesson planning, lesson conduction and the orchestration of learning situations. Empirical data on lesson quality and on classroom management and on authority are presented and discussed.

Observation of student teachers' practice

The observation of teaching and learning situations is a central aspect of teacher training. There exist many epistemological problems and psychological effects a tutor can't ignore. It is a difficult issue for both observers and observed; especially when the observation has an evaluation as its goal.

Aims:

Students are in a position to observe the behaviour of teachers in a teaching situation, to diagnose difficulties and communicate them, and to assist student teachers in their reflection and in improving the quality of their teaching. These objectives are achieved through working on samples of actual practice. The tutors can conceptualise, develop and reflect on action as situated agents, which cannot be conceived of as 'disengaged'.

Contents:

Firstly the concepts of professional observation and evaluation of lesson conduction and of teachers' interaction with students are discussed. Different observation methods and instruments for variable situations, especially techniques of videography and methods for analysing classroom situations are practised. The tutors learn also how to instruct and assist student teachers in observing and analysing learning processes and pupil behaviour.

Accompanying student teachers' formative processes

For the Luxembourg model of teacher training one of the goals is that the trainee develop her autonomy and the ability to take charge of her own training project. This requires special skills on the part of the tutors.

Aims:

Students are capable of supporting student teachers in integrating into their school, identifying with the profession and transitioning from professional training into the profession of teachers. They are able to professionally accompany student teachers in the development of their education project and in their formative process. They are in a position to assist student teachers in reflecting on their educational career and their relation to knowledge and values. They know to formatively and summatively assess the professional training process.

Contents:

The participants study the personality development and transformative processes in the transition from studying to teacher training and from professional training into the

71

72

pedagogical profession; the novice teacher in the face of competing ethical challenges, social expectations, institutional functions and professional imperatives. They practise methods of guiding the training of student teachers (project method, goal setting with progressive target stages, etc.) and exchange about ways and conditions of training situations that promote development and strengthen autonomy. Finally they are introduced to conceptualising their own practices as tutor, appropriate handling of role expectations, task- and situation specific role design.

Consultation and formative evaluation

Tutors have to support and to evaluate student teachers. These are difficult roles, which can conduct to a certain ambiguity and conflicts. For that reason a training of counseling skills is necessary.

Aims:

Students know how to communicate effectively and to collaborate with student teachers. They are reliable, authentic and articulate in supervising and assisting student teachers and appreciative in their interaction. They are aware of approaches and methods of consultation and formative evaluation. They are

capable of applying them in practical situations.

Contents:

The different concepts of consultation, counseling techniques and evaluative interviews are presented and practiced: Conducting discussions about planning, advice and reflection and methods of formative and summative evaluation of formative processes.

Clinical analysis of practice

Teacher and teacher educators should be aware of the important influence of subjectivity, of desire and the affects on the teaching practice. For that reason a seminar in clinical analysis of professional practice of the tutors belongs to the programme.

Aims:

Students are able to differentiate in shaping their actions in the context of dyadic relationships and their inherent risks, and to reflect on them. Tutors are capable of engaging with their own learning biography. They are conscious that the professional development toward the teaching profession challenges a person as a whole. They are aware that one never fully knows oneself or one's student teacher, and that subjectivity, individuality, plays a role in formative processes and is to be taken into account. They are capable of cultivating the ability of 'perceiving personal feelings as an expression of a perhaps unconscious awareness of a social situation', of making them conscious and articulating and exchanging them with student teachers in order to resolve them where appropriate. (Lehmkuhl, 2002)

Contents:

Taking part in this clinical setting, the tutors will analyse their own practices and their relationship with the student teacher. They will learn to recognize elements of unconscious transference and countertransference and to triangulate the relationship.

Methodological annotations regarding course seminars

Linguistic concepts and concepts of action theory, as separate viewpoints, form a common epistemological background for teacher training. It is therefore important for tutor training to proceed methodologically from teacher action and the different pedagogical and personal discourses.

By sharpening perception and with the help of appropriate concepts, these studies are largely based on and oriented toward learning from analysing case studies or in

relation to situations that arise in enrolees' practice, and also oriented toward improving the capacity for improvisation.

The development of operational competences is activated and pursued not through applied knowledge, but through reflection and constructed knowledge, according to Schön (1983) epistemology of practice, and Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984). This equally applies to prospective or progressive tutors, who reflect on, evaluate and conceptualise both observed teaching situations of student teachers and their own ways of tutoring, as well as continually developing their own practices according to new hypotheses. Students enrolled in our tutor training courses are therefore given the opportunity throughout all offered courses and seminars to articulate their own practices with the help of theoretical concepts. A number

of courses are specifically focussed on one's own action and speech, as well as above all the clinical and psychoanalytical analysis of one's own practices.

The entire programme is largely supported by research projects. The epistemological and ethical conditions and possibilities of working on filmed lessons with students, tutors and student teachers are being investigated by different teams of researchers from a variety of angles; as are the effects and difficulties of tutoring and of identity construction for student teachers.

Conclusion

Tutors are first and foremost agents in teacher training, who keep letting themselves be challenged time and again by unpredictable classroom and training situations and thus keep searching creatively for different solutions to enable knowledge construction for continually more heterogeneous classes, and improvement of practices for student teachers who learn from this attitude.

As teachers as well as tutors they are physically and emotionally engaged agents (Combe and Kolbe, 2008). What Heidegger (1971: 50) says of teacher and learner can here be applied even more onto tutor and novice: '*The single advance and advantage a teacher has over their learners is that of having very much more to learn, and that is: letting-learn. The teacher has to be capable of being even more teachable than their learners. The teacher is thus much less sure of his own task and of himself than the learners are of theirs and of themselves.*' (translation)

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73

74

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